

THE COURT HISTORIANS VERSUS REVISIONISM

*An Examination of Langer and Gleason,
THE CHALLENGE TO ISOLATION, 1937-1940
and
Herbert Feis
THE ROAD TO PEARL HARBOR*

by
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Second, revised and enlarged edition

THE WORLD CRISIS AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY: *The Challenge to Isolation, 1937-1940*. By William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, New York: Harper, 1952. xv. 794 pp. \$7.50

Here, at long last, is the first installment of the work which the Rockefeller Foundation, in its *Annual Report* for 1946 (pp. 188-189), announced that it was subsidizing in the sum of \$139,000 in order to check and frustrate the development of revisionist historical scholarship after the second World War. Even this large sum, astronomical in the perspective of the ordinary historical scholar, did not suffice, and I have heard that the Rockefeller grant was subsequently increased. At any rate, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation supplemented the Rockefeller donation by a grant of \$10,000. The established total would amount to at least \$150,000. This is to cover two volumes, the second of which will bring the story down through Pearl Harbor. From the above figures, it is evident that these two volumes will be the most costly in the whole history of historical writing. It is not likely that even Allan Nevins ever collected a comparable sum for embellishing the career of any of our past captains of industry, finance, or statecraft. The authors must personally have absorbed all of this vast sum, for they tell us in the Preface that: "At the very outset we decided not to rely on a large staff, but to do the research and writing ourselves." Later on in the review we shall offer our estimate as to whether the investment is likely to pay off as the donors hoped.

In the *Saturday Evening Post* of October 4, 1947, the late Charles Austin Beard concisely summarized the purpose of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Council on Foreign Relations in making this large grant to Professor Langer and his associate: "Translated into precise English, this means that the Foundation and the Council do not want journalists or any other persons to examine too closely and criticize the official propaganda and the official statements relative to 'our basic aims and activities' during World War II. In short, they hope that, among other things, the policies and measures of Franklin D. Roosevelt will escape in the coming years the critical analysis, evaluation and exposition that befell the policies and measures of President Woodrow Wilson and the Entente Allies after World War I."¹

¹ After reading the original edition of this brochure, Mr. Arnold J. Zurcher, Executive Director of the Sloan Foundation, wrote me a courteous letter disclaiming any desire on the part of the Sloan Foundation to frustrate revisionist scholarship and stating that "We believe that the more points of view brought to bear by disciplined scholars upon the war or any other historical event is in the public interest and should be encouraged."

A careful perusal of this first volume of the effort to emulate Horatius at the bridge, figuratively seeking to stem the tide of Revisionism, fully confirms Dr. Beard's estimate and prophecy. It is, probably, the most elaborate example of the work of court historians in the whole history of historical writing, and the smoothest and most adroit job ever turned in by a court historian, from Sallust to Robert Sherwood. Indeed, while not so boastful as the Assyrian royal annals, the book is no more critical of the deeds of President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull than were the Assyrian scribes of the achievements and policies of Sennacherib. The excellence of this exercise in court historiography is exactly what an informed person would expect of a man possessing the great intellectual ability, amazing industry, vast learning, and high literary talent of William Leonard Langer. If his book does not accomplish the purpose which his sponsors expected of it, this is not his fault. No living person could have executed the assignment more competently; in the reviewer's opinion, no other historian or publicist could have done so well. The planning and tone of the book are, obviously, the work of Professor Langer.

Professor Gleason's attitude toward revisionist scholarship before 1940 is not known. He may have privately shared Professor Langer's views. At any rate, they both have held high posts in our "Ministry of Truth," to employ George Orwell's terminology for the moment, since the eve of Pearl Harbor.

Back in 1924-1925, when the reviewer was engaged in the revisionist controversies which are reproduced in his *In Quest of Truth and Justice*, Professor Langer told his graduate students at Clark University that he would relish no experience less than to become involved in a controversy with me, if the facts were preponderantly on my side. In due time, he may feel that he did not exaggerate. In those days, nothing could have seemed more unlikely than that Professor Langer and myself would ever appear on the opposite sides of a debate on world policy—unless it would have been that the man who was then the ablest "isolationist" diplomatic historian in the United States would, a quarter of a century later, be the author of a gigantic attack on the very "isolationism" which he so valiantly espoused in the 1920's and 1930's.

My relations with Professor Langer at that time were very close and intimate. He succeeded me as professor of history at Clark University, with my warm and hearty approval. Later on, I turned over to him, as the man best fitted for the task, my assignment as bibliographic editor of *Foreign Affairs*. I brought him into contact with Alfred A. Knopf, who published his three masterly volumes on Euro-

pean diplomacy from 1878 to 1902 and his later work on the Vichy régime. I followed with pride his rise to the position of unquestionably the ablest American historian dealing with European diplomacy. Professor Langer made generous and ample return for all this. He rendered extensive and invaluable assistance to me when I was preparing the successive editions of my *Genesis of the World War*. He was ever gracious and generous in responding to my not infrequent requests for information and judgment. It was due in no small part to his aid that he was able to write of my *Genesis* that the facts about the responsibility for the first World War "could not be more successfully presented at the present stage of our historical knowledge."

In his volumes before 1945 on European diplomacy, Professor Langer never came down as far as 1914, but his articles, reviews, and class-room lectures, as well as numerous personal conversations and much correspondence with me, left no doubt that he was a robust Revisionist, far less compromising and occasionally confused than Sidney B. Fay. He was not carried away by the hysterical propaganda against Hitler during the 1930's. In a notable article in the *Yale Review*, June, 1938, on "When German Dreams Come True," he debunked the current mythology that Hitler planned to dominate the planet. Hitler's main aim seemed to be economic hegemony over south Central Europe and the Balkans: "Call it Germany's manifest destiny if you will. Many of German's best minds have been fascinated by it in the course of the last century." He quoted with approval the pronouncement of the famous British historian and publicist, Sir Harry Johnston, in 1905, that Germany was entitled to the Balkans and the Near East as its sphere for expansion. He did not, however, go as far as Walter Millis had gone in the previous year, in his *Viewed Without Alarm: Europe Today* (pp. 53-54), where Millis said that, if the Nazis could swallow up Central Europe and "create a going economic and social system" out of it, such an achievement would be a blessing—"a market and a stabilizing force for the rest of the world." That Professor Langer did not surrender his Revisionism and what he would now have to call his "isolationism" (in the semantic system he employs in the book under review) before the end of 1940 is evident from the fact, personally known to the reviewer, that he was engaged on important scholarly work in behalf of those opposed to interventionism as late as the autumn of that year.

In the spring of 1941, for some reason not personally known to the reviewer, Professor Langer apparently became frightened and parachuted to safety in an article on "The Faith of Woodrow Wilson," in

the New York *Times* Sunday Magazine, May 4, 1941, praising the diplomacy of Woodrow Wilson which he had for a quarter of a century so vigorously criticized. It was as though Henry Ford, Sewell Avery, or Ernest T. Weir had suddenly written an article for the *Times* or *Fortune* warmly commending the Wagner Act and the National Labor Relations Board. Until Professor Langer offers a plausible explanation of his *volte-face*, one can only logically infer from circumstantial evidence as to what brought it about. A number of trends at the time may account for it.

Harvard University, under President James Branch Conant, was going wild for war after the fall of the Low Countries and France in the late spring and early summer of 1940, and Langer was well known as a skeptic on interventionism. Continued skepticism might be precarious under these circumstances, even for so eminent a professor as Langer. Hugo Munsterberg, an even more distinguished Harvard faculty member, had been roughly manhandled for his nonconformist attitude during the first World War, and Langer had been a student at Harvard at this time. Moreover, he had come to move among the "best people" in Cambridge and Boston, and, after the fall of France and Dunkirk, their Anglomania knew no bounds. The Harvard atmosphere was no longer healthy for a stalwart Revisionist and a so-called "isolationist," especially one of German descent. A distinguished resident of Cambridge who read the first edition of this brochure wrote me that: "I have heard from reliable sources that Professor Langer was under suspicion by the George Apleys of the Harvard Board of Overseers in 1940."

Professor Langer entered government service in 1941 and rose to one of the most important posts in the Office of Strategic Services during the War. At its close, after receiving the Medal of Merit for his work with the OSS, he became a special assistant to the Secretary of State. At present, he holds one of the top positions in our "Ministry of Truth."

Personally, I have never discussed with Professor Langer the reasons for his transition from the ablest revisionist historian after the first World War to the most highly paid opponent of Revisionism at the close of the second World War. I have met him only once since the summer of 1940. That was when I went to him for an item of information at the OSS Offices in Washington in 1945. He was friendly, courteous, and helpful, but obviously highly nervous, and gave no indication of wishing to encourage me to launch into the good old days of our revisionist collaboration.

All this background is important, even indispensable, as a prepara-

tion for judging the character and quality of the book under review. As to the latter, it has been hailed by many of the more eminent interventionist statesmen still alive, and by the outstanding members of the "blackout" and "whitewashing" contingent among journalists and historians, as a veritable masterpiece of objectivity and impartiality in historical craftsmanship. It is, admittedly, a masterpiece but not of resolute and realistic historical scholarship. It is, as was stated above, the most impressive product of court historiography in the whole course of historical writing from the late Paleolithic Cave of Font-de-Gaume to 1952. Professor Langer had a difficult task to perform. The court historians of the past usually had to satisfy only one sponsor or benefactor, be it an emperor, king, noble, or prelate. Professor Langer was compelled to please the Rockefeller Foundation, the Council on Foreign Affairs, and the State Department—and these three patrons did not always see eye-to-eye on every phase of Rooseveltian foreign policy. For example, George F. Kennan has recently revealed a decidedly revisionist attitude toward our foreign policy.

That Professor Langer could turn in a work which obviously pleases all of his sponsors is proof of his transcendent abilities. It is not only a highly competent job of court historical writing; it is also a very "slick" achievement. The works of previous court historians, from Sallust, Einhard, Asser, Rigord, Joinville, Widukind, Paul of Bernreid, the Italian Humanist embellishers of princely patrons, William Camden, De Thou (Thuanus), the Duke of Saint-Simon, Albert Vandal and other adulators of Napoleon, to the devout *literati* in the Roosevelt circle, are trivial primers by comparison, with respect to both scholarship and shrewd techniques.

Especially, is the Langer and Gleason volume superior to the earlier efforts to whitewash the foreign policy of the Roosevelt administration. It compares with them about as the elegant manipulator of a roulette wheel at Monte Carlo compares with the cigar-tilted operator of a shell-game in the sideshow of a travelling circus. There is in it none of the superficiality and irrelevant evasiveness of Walter Millis' *This is Pearl*; the conceited impudence of Schlesinger Jr.'s rhetorical lunges at Revisionists; the brash and reckless gusto of Basil Rauch's *Roosevelt from Munich to Pearl Harbor*; the haughty and sophisticated imitation of Orosius by Herbert Feis in *The Road to Pearl Harbor*; the boastful parade of self-confessed iniquity in Robert Sherwood's *Roosevelt and Hopkins*; the Jovian evasiveness of Samuel Eliot Morison when treating diplomatic history; or the almost sophomoric defense and adulation of the double standard in international morality

by H. L. Trefousse in his *Germany and American Neutrality, 1939-1941*. The Langer and Gleason tome is a smooth and deceptive product. It does not telegraph its punches or betray its motivation by too obvious selection of material, transparent animus, or readily discernible defects in methodology. It gives evidence of most extended research, presents a vast array of facts, and states them in a disarmingly engaging style, seemingly devoid of all guile and partisanship.

None the less, the book is as complete a whitewash of Roosevelt, Hull, Stimson, *et al.* as the works of Millis, Rauch, Feis, or Sherwood. We are repeatedly assured that neither Roosevelt nor Hull had the remotest desire to lead the United States into a war, or expected that their actions would so involve us. Indeed, this assertion is so frequently repeated that it constitutes about the only defect in an otherwise almost perfect feat of dissimulation, so far as the general reading public is concerned. Only the well-informed scholar would be able to detect the crucial information which has been omitted or the false implications attributed to the material which is utilized. But the frequent assurance given the reader of Roosevelt's pristine innocence of even a trace of bellicose intent is likely to cause any person with an alert mind, even if unacquainted with the facts, to recall the lady in *Hamlet* who protested her innocence too much.

This thesis of Rooseveltian pacifism and integrity is sustained in a number of ways. The authors assume an air of rather naive innocence and almost ethereal detachment, quite foreign to Professor Langer's realistic earlier books on European diplomacy. They almost make the reader believe that they felt that it would be not only ungenerous but even bad manners to discover any flaw in the thesis of Roosevelt's abhorrence or rejection of war as "an instrument of national policy."

Langer and Gleason also contend that we cannot now know, and probably never can know, what actually went on in Roosevelt's mind and motivated and guided his conduct. We could be completely informed about these things only if we had available a psychoanalyst's report on Roosevelt, the record of all his telephone calls and chats, even his reveries before he went to sleep at night and before rising in the morning.

Obviously, this is true of any figure in human history. But it has not prevented even the greatest of historians in the past from delineating the motives and policies of rulers from Sargon of Akkad to Josef Stalin. There has been no hesitation on the part of the most eminent members of the historical craft in outlining the motives and describing the policies of Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, Henry II of England, Cromwell, Napoleon, and a host of other

prominent figures in the past. These historians had no psychoanalyst's records, telephone conversations, or day (or night) dreams of the public figures studied and assessed. Nor did Professor Langer himself hesitate to expound with great assurance, the motives, plans, and policies of men like Bismarck, even though he had but the merest fraction of personal information about Bismarck, compared to what he had available on Roosevelt and his entourage.

Indeed, it is suggested in the book that Roosevelt was such a complex character that nobody except, perhaps, God himself, could ever understand him. This hardly accords with most interpretations of Roosevelt's character and personality, even the majority of those deriving from intimate and friendly sources. Unpredictability is hardly identical with complexity. Nor is complexity the proper term to apply to complete subservience to considerations of political expediency or to boundless ethical pliability. Moreover, it is interesting to note throughout the volume that any vagueness and uncertainty about Roosevelt's thoughts and motives exist chiefly in the case of situations which might be damaging to his reputation for benign pacifism. In other instances, the authors seem to be in little doubt concerning what Roosevelt thought and desired to accomplish.

The third method of protecting and perpetuating the Roosevelt legend followed by Langer and Gleason is to give the facts which they do present to the reader an interpretation compatible with this aim, whether warranted by the context or not. A conspicuous example is the vast importance assigned to Roosevelt's desire to save England from ravishment and destruction at the hands of Hitler, although the authors had already given away their case (p. 62) by admitting that Hitler ardently desired peace with Britain. This desire for the salvation of Britain, not a desire for war, was the main motive (obviously gleaned by the authors without any esoteric insight into Roosevelt's mind in this case) which guided Roosevelt in the critical years of 1939 and 1940.

One would gain no impression from the book that Hitler was one of the most servile Anglomaniacs in European history, although the authors do admit that there is no reason to doubt that Hitler sincerely desired to maintain good relations with Great Britain. His last desire was to destroy Britain or the British Empire. Throughout his writings and speeches Hitler expressed admiration for Britain and for the services of the Empire in subjecting the "inferior" races of the world to the blessings of the white man's burden. Even after Dunkirk, as Liddell Hart has made clear in *German Generals Talk*, Hitler was

not only eager to give Britain generous terms of peace but also to offer her the services of the *Wehrmacht* and *Luftwaffe* in putting down rebellion or enemies anywhere in the world. Indeed, Langer and Gleason even reject the well-established fact that it was political considerations which led Hitler to halt his army and allow the British to escape at Dunkirk. In fact, they even ignore the fact that the British did escape because Hitler permitted them to do so, in order to further his peace program with Britain. The authors still write about the "miracle of Dunkirk," though the only miracle was Hitler's stupidity in letting the British get away. The main item which would have been placed in serious jeopardy by accepting Hitler's peace proposals in the autumn of 1939 and in 1940 was not the integrity or security of Britain but the protracted political tenure of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill.

Another crucial example of this technique of playing down the facts actually adduced is afforded by the treatment of the slump in the New Deal and Roosevelt's political fortunes in 1937 and 1938. This critical situation is duly brought out in the text. But there is no hint that Roosevelt may have been impelled thereby to consider war as a possible solution of his problems and perplexities; far from it, according to Langer and Gleason, all this only encouraged him to pursue his peace policy more vigorously though more quietly and subtly.

The fourth main technique employed by the authors in their superb performance as court historians is to overlook the decisive evidence which would overthrow their basic thesis of Roosevelt's adamant and invincible bent toward peace. For example, although they show acquaintance with James A. Farley's memoirs, they limit themselves to Farley's opposition to the third term drive and conveniently disregard the passage in this book (p. 39) which shows that Roosevelt discussed war with Japan as a means of solving the depression in his very first cabinet meetings.

The name of Tyler Kent is not to be found in the Index. The documents Kent decoded in the American Embassy in London constitute the acid test of whether Roosevelt envisaged war or peace in the nearly 2,000 secret communications with Churchill, beginning in the autumn of 1939. Churchill, himself, reveals in his book, *Their Finest Hour* (p. 23) that "the chief business between our two countries was virtually conducted by these personal interchanges between him and me." It is probable that these secret coded exchanges between Roosevelt and Churchill are more important in the way of revealing the actual motives, methods, and intentions of Roosevelt than all the

vast archival material studied by Professors Langer and Gleason, or even by Professor Charles C. Tansill. If the State Department really wished Langer and Gleason to tell the American people the truth, these so-called Kent Documents would have been placed at the disposal of the authors and the latter would have honestly told us what they found therein bearing upon Roosevelt's bellicosity or pacific program. That they have not been made available for study, even to those in the confidence of a Democrat State Department, would naturally imply that their contents will not enhance the reputation of President Roosevelt as a man of peace.

Nor is any mention made, so far as I can ascertain, of the contents and significance of the so-called *German White Paper*, really Polish documents captured by the Germans in 1939. They are very important as revealing the activities of Ambassador William C. Bullitt and others in buttressing Polish, British, and French resistance to Hitler and the assurances given to the Poles of American support in a European war. That they were genuine could have been implied from Secretary Hull's frantic and indignant denial of their authenticity. Both Professor Tansill and myself have independently established the thorough authenticity of these documents. Langer and Gleason also overlook the important passage that appears even in the censored *Forrestal Diaries* in which Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy tells how Roosevelt urged him to "put some iron up Chamberlin's backsides" in the spring and summer of 1939.

There are also the minutes of the conference of government lawyers in Washington at the time of the Destroyer Deal, at which it is said on good authority that there was general agreement that this arrangement put the United States into the war, both legally and morally. There is no evidence that these minutes have been investigated. If they were, the authors make no effort to tell us what they found there.

Another interesting source of information ignored by the authors is the army records. Here might have been found the date of the order to send army engineers to Northern Ireland to prepare for the reception of American forces. This date would have been found most enlightening when placed in juxtaposition with what President Roosevelt was telling the American people at the time about his pacific program and his determination to keep the country out of war.

These are only some representative examples of the manner in which the authors almost invariably shy away from any damaging evidence which could not be explained away by casuistry or semantic legerdemain.

The above all too scanty sampling of the techniques employed by Langer and Gleason in their dextrous and astute whitewashing and drycleaning of the Roosevelt record makes it evident how they have ostensibly been able to vindicate the thesis that Roosevelt never wished war but was pushed into it by the overwhelming force of circumstances which he deplored and abhorred. It would not be at all possible within the limits of this review to refute the facts and interpretations submitted in this large book. It would require a volume almost equal to the nearly 800 pages of the Langer-Gleason opus to do this. The two magisterial volumes by Charles Austin Beard on Roosevelt's foreign policy have already destroyed much of the structure erected by Langer and Gleason with such effort and expense. Indeed, the book by the latter writers may be regarded as the most elaborate presentation of the "appearances" of Roosevelt's policies which Beard so devastatingly demolishes in his treatment of the "realities." A book of about equal length by Professor Charles Callan Tansill on Roosevelt's foreign policy, *Backdoor to War: Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933-1941*, has just been published. This provides an effective and heavily documented refutation of the work of these distinguished and capable court historians. After the second volume of Langer and Gleason appears, bringing the story down through Pearl Harbor, a considerable book will be produced and will be devoted exclusively to a critique of the Langer-Gleason project. Among its contributors will be the more eminent revisionist scholars of the United States and Europe.

We might, however, give a little preview of "things to come," as H. G. Wells would say. On the very first page of the Preface (xi), in discussing the first World War, it is stated that, as a result of "popular disillusionment with the fruits of victory," there was a confusion of mind on the part of the American populace and, in the end, they "became firmly convinced that their grand crusade had in fact been engineered by munition makers, international bankers, and foreign propagandists." The logical reaction to this is: "So, what?" The best sober scholarship on the subject recognizes the great importance of just these groups in bringing the United States into war in 1917, as was admitted even by Professor Richard W. Leopold in an article on the subject highly hostile to Revisionism, published in *World Politics*, April, 1950. One only has only to recall the writings of Joseph V. Fuller, H. C. Engelbrecht and Frank Hanighen, Paul Birdsall, H. C. Peterson, and Sidney Rogerson on these matters. Indeed, if such conceptions of the reasons for our entry into the first World War are proof of intellectual confusion, then few American historians were more confused than Professor Langer, himself, for some twenty years.

On the very first page of the book, there occurs what is, perhaps, an even more amazing statement: "Among American Presidents, Franklin D. Roosevelt was certainly one of the best fitted by background, education and experience, as well as by interest and temperament, to understand world conditions and to sense their implications for the national interest and security." If being born to wealth, educated under severe parental custody by private tutors to the age of 14, life as a youth in the narrow and exclusive social circles of Groton and Harvard, carefully sheltered trips abroad to visit wealthy friends, viewing European life from luxury hotels and great estates, a limited and exclusive legal practice, absorption in local and state politics, and hobbies of naval antiquities and landscaping, constitute the ideal preparation for understanding world conditions and diplomatic perplexities, Professor Langer has never previously so regarded it in his earlier writings on diplomats and diplomacy. Nor do I know of any other reliable diplomatic historian who has done so. A not unfriendly commentator might consider that it would be difficult to imagine a background less designed to fit one to comprehend competently world affairs of 1914 and thereafter.

On page 5, we are told that: "Far from shirking responsibility, he [Roosevelt] positively enjoyed it, and therefore refused to delegate any significant part of it." Translated into non-Langerian language, this means that Mr. Roosevelt was something of a self-centered egotist who did not know *how* to delegate authority and, thus, tried to achieve the impossible.

Perhaps even more misleading than the portrayal of Roosevelt is the characterization of Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who is presented as "a man of great integrity and high principle. . . . His prescription . . . was reaffirmation of traditional standards of justice and fair dealing, insistence on peaceful methods to settle international differences. . . . The two men Roosevelt and Hull, one daring and pliable, the other circumspect and inflexible, made a good team."

Mr. Hull, who had some real knowledge of commercial affairs and was deeply and sincerely interested in freeing the world from rigid trade shackles, might have made an excellent Secretary of Commerce, and all the good he accomplished in the State Department was really achieved in the province of commercial relations.

It is probable that no man in the history of the United States, with the possible exception of Edward R. Stettinius Jr., was less fitted by knowledge, experience, and temperament to be Secretary of State. Mr. Hull had little knowledge of history, world affairs, or diplomatic pro-

cedure. He had slight grasp of the realities in international affairs or diplomatic methods. He was, perhaps, the classic example in all history of the Pharisee in dealing with international relations. Out of his ignorance of history, world affairs, and diplomatic procedure he built up a mental world of more or less complete fantasy in regard to the actual policies and activities of nations and their diplomatic representatives, including the United States. He then proceeded to judge the methods, acts and proposals of foreign countries according to these unreal and fantastic standards—what have been called "Hull's platitudes, beatitudes and banalities." If they failed to measure up to these, Hull then tended to assail such countries with all the vigor and animus of a Tennessee feudist, especially if they were countries, like Germany, Italy, and Japan, which Hull did not like. Indeed, one eminent historian has not unfairly likened Hull to "Devil Anse" Hatfield fitted out with pince-nez eye glasses and a silk cord. In fact, "Old Anse" might have blushed if he had listened in on one of Hull's characteristic beratings of subordinates whose actions had displeased him or, especially, his comments to the Japanese representatives on the afternoon of Pearl Harbor Day when they handed Hull what was, considering the background and circumstances, an amazingly accurate historical account of the nature and results of Roosevelt-Hull foreign policy as it affected Japan.

Hull and Roosevelt made a "good team" only in fomenting war. Once Roosevelt had decided upon war in 1937, if not earlier, Hull could be counted upon to feud persistently with "aggressors" and to reject their every effort to reach a reasonable *modus vivendi* "short of war."

Professor Langer (p. 13) ridicules the naiveté of men like Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh in allowing themselves to be "beguiled" into thinking that the Hitler-Nazi threat to America was very remote. But, as late as 1938, as shown by his article in the *Yale Review*, few, if any, American historians believed more completely in this remoteness than Professor Langer. Indeed, further on in this very book, he still seems to feel this way in 1952, for he stresses several times the fact that Hitler did not have the faintest intention of attacking the United States.

Insincerity is, perhaps unwittingly, imputed to President Roosevelt (p. 37) in regard to his assurances to the American people at the initiation of his armament program. It is implied that he never really believed that American security could be assured by a strong home defense, and that, after communications from Mr. Bullitt in 1938, he certainly entertained no such notions. But Mr. Roosevelt went right on telling the people that the country was rearming only to keep war

away from the United States almost to the very eve of Pearl Harbor.

Even more interesting is Professor Langer's handling of Roosevelt's denial that he had said that our frontier lies on the Rhine, in early February, 1939. Langer leaves no doubt that he personally believes that Roosevelt made the statement, and then goes on to remark that the denial was "unfortunate," in that it threw suspicion on Roosevelt's other plans of the moment in foreign affairs. Once more translated into non-Langerian semantics, it is bad to have a liar caught up in his own lies, since it is more difficult to get the people to believe subsequent lies.

On pages 204-205 it is implied at length that the bombing of helpless civilians during the war was started by Germany and was a German responsibility. Yet scholars as widely informed as Professors Langer and Gleason must have known that J. M. Spaight, Secretary of the British Air Command, in 1944, Liddell Hart, in 1946, and Air Marshall Sir Arthur Harris, himself, in 1947, had all written books showing clearly and fully that Hitler had sought to bar the bombing of non-military objectives and that his proposals had been brusquely turned down by the British who had planned such bombing as early as 1936 and had launched the first such attack on May 11, 1940.

On page 150 the policy of Roosevelt and Hull toward Japan before Pearl Harbor is described as "cautious and patient" and designed to assist the Japanese moderates at Tokyo. How far any such statement departs from the facts can be ascertained by a perusal of Chapters II-VI, XX-XI, and XXVI of Professor Tansill's *Back Door to War*.

One could go on in this manner, through page after page and chapter after chapter, to the end of the book where the authors apparently uphold Dexter Perkins' thesis that Roosevelt was pushed into war through the pressure of American public opinion, alarmed over the fate of Britain, France, and the other "free nations."

From time to time, and on the most vital matters, the authors seem to have forgotten what they said in other portions of the book. As we have indicated above, the authors tell us early in the book (p. 62) that Hitler had no desire whatever to attack Britain and France, with which he sincerely wished to be on the most friendly terms, and that he had not the most remote intention of invading the United States under any circumstances. Yet, the bulk of the whole volume is built around the basic thesis that Britain and France had to be saved from Hitler, and that this urgent duty of salvation had to be assumed by the United States, not only for the sake of Britain and France, but also for our own security from the menace of a Hitler who did not wish to attack Britain or France and never for a moment considered attacking the United States.

On page 129 we are told that Mr. Roosevelt's unneutral support of Britain and France was due to his conviction that they were "an essential European bulwark for the defense of the Western Hemisphere." And, again, on page 137 it is said that Mr. Roosevelt feared lest the Nazis would get possession of the British and French fleets and bring the war to "our own backyard." Yet, on page 498, it is stated that the "recently published German records show that in fact Hitler had neither planned nor even thought seriously of an invasion of England," to say nothing of an attack on Iowa, Brazil, or Thailand. The alleged Nazi menace to Latin America and the Far East is detailed in a manner calculated to support President Roosevelt's fantastic warnings about the Nazi timetable to invade the United States and later to conquer the world. At the same time, we are told on page 246 that Hitler was utterly unprepared even for a long European war and did not envisage one. Indeed, on page 166, it is revealed that Hitler was not very well prepared for a war on Poland and that the legend of a vast mechanized Nazi army in 1939 was a complete myth: "Of the hundred divisions they put into the field against Poland only three were mechanized and none completely motorized." In short, in some portions of their volume the authors imply support of the specter of Hitler as an imminent world conqueror, while in others they portray him as ill-prepared for a local war and not even envisaging a crossing of the English channel.

Such confusion and contradiction may have been due in part to the mental conflict between Langer, the astute and keen ex-Revisionist, and Langer, the paid court historian. That there is not more of it is amazing in the light of the fact that Professor Langer's knowledge and convictions relative to the second World War and American entry therein were originally firmly grounded in revisionist perspective and were in thorough accord with the ideas being set forth by revisionist scholars now writing on these themes.

At any rate, there is little doubt that revisionist critics will make as great a shambles of the two volumes by Langer and Gleason as Professor M. H. Cochran did of Bernadotte Schmitt's *The Coming of the War 1914* in his memorable critique, *Germany Not Guilty in 1914* (1931). If this proves to be the case, it is not because of lack of ability on the part of Professors Langer and Gleason; it is simply the inevitable result of the fact that the task of harmonizing sound and honest historical scholarship with the thesis of the integrity, wisdom and pacific intent of Roosevelt foreign policy is beyond the capacity of any human intellect.

We now come to the final consideration to be taken up in this review. We freely concede that a better job of historical apologetics, quasi-factual exegesis, and court historiography could hardly have been executed by any other two living historians. They have turned in the best product their patrons could have asked for or expected. Will it, therefore, perform the function hoped for in checking and frustrating revisionist scholarship, that is to say, the search for the truth concerning Roosevelt's foreign policy? The answer must be a resounding *No*, and the assertion that, in this respect at least, a large sum of money has been wasted.

First and foremost, and fundamental to the whole issue at stake, despite the authors' elaborate account of the Roosevelt diplomacy, they beg the whole question as to whether this was indispensable to the security and well-being of the country. This is obvious to any careful reader of the book, in spite of Professor Samuel Flagg Bemis's strong statement to the contrary in his review in the *New York Times*, January 20, 1952. Though the authors leave us in little doubt as to the details of Roosevelt's statecraft in foreign affairs, they do not tackle resolutely the problem of its inevitability or necessity, but this is precisely the main issue in the implications of Revisionism. Hence, the debate over the wisdom of Roosevelt's foreign policy remains essentially where it was before the book appeared, although by denying any wish on the part of Hitler down through 1939 to conquer Britain or France, and any plan whatever to attack America, the authors drastically weaken the case for American intervention. They all but destroy it by implying that Roosevelt was right in refusing Churchill's plea to enter the war in 1940 and equally right in actually forcing his way in at the end of the 1941. Obviously, if there was any justification for American entry into the war at all, there was far greater reason in 1940, when Britain stood alone, than in December, 1941, when Hitler's air attack on Britain had failed and Soviet Russia, with its vast reserves of manpower, had entered on the side of England.

It should have been obvious that no book, in however many volumes, would check Revisionism. With the multitude of materials available to invite reexamining the facts relative to the outbreak of the second World War, the probability of greater deception of the populace by Roosevelt than by Wilson—indeed, the admission by some of the ablest partisans of Roosevelt that he deliberately lied us into war, albeit for a noble purpose, the more disastrous results of the second World War, and the professional survival of some honest historians after the ordeal of war, it was inevitable that there would be a revival of Revisionism soon after 1945.

The only practical way to check Revisionism was not to try to whitewash Mr. Roosevelt's policy and deeds, but to deny revisionist historians access to documents, to intimidate publishers who might wish to publish revisionist books, to ignore and refuse to review such books and, if they are reviewed at all, to smear the books and authors, rather than to examine the facts and contentions in a fair manner. Now, as I have already made clear at great length in my brochure, "The Struggle Against the Historical Blackout," all this was already being amply taken care of by pressure groups far more alert, determined, ferocious, and ruthless than the Rockefeller Foundation or the Council on Foreign Affairs. Indeed, these two organizations would appear to be rather benign and humble seekers after truth compared to the pressure groups which operate the historical blackout. These pressure groups even have more money available for their work than the Rockefeller Foundation would even dream of putting into any historical program.

The volume of revisionist writing on the second World War would, probably, be stupendous by this time but for the blackout squeezeplay; yet, despite all this, revisionist books by American authors have come forth far more quickly and in greater volume than after the first World War. While Professor Fay began to write revisionist articles in 1920, the earliest comprehensive revisionist volume on the first World War, (so conceded even by Selig Adler) was my *Genesis of the World War* published in 1926, some eight years after the Armistice of 1918. The next book of the kind, and the only other important revisionist volume on European diplomacy, Sidney B. Fay's *Origins of the World War*, did not appear until 1928, ten years after the war closed. Studies of American diplomacy came even more slowly, save for John Kenneth Turner's brilliantly argumentative, but only indirectly historical, volume, *Shall It Be Again?* which was published in 1922. C. Hartley Grattan's *Why We Fought* came out in 1929; Walter Millis' *The Road to War*, in 1935; and Charles Callan Tansill's monumental *America Goes to War* in 1938, no less than twenty years after the Armistice.

The volume and rapidity of revisionist writing since the second World War are amazing by comparison, despite the fact that not one leading publisher has yet produced a revisionist volume since V-J Day. John T. Flynn's *As We Go Marching* was published in 1944, during the war, his brochures on Pearl Harbor in 1944 and 1945, and his *The Roosevelt Myth* in 1948. George Morgenstern's *Pearl Harbor* appeared in 1947; Charles Austin Beard's two volumes on Roosevelt's foreign policy came out in 1946 and 1948; William Henry Chamberlin's *America's Second Crusade* was published in 1950; Frederic R. Sanborn's

Design for War made its appearance in 1951; and Professor Charles Callan Tansill's *Backdoor to War*, likely to remain the definitive revisionist volume for a generation, was published in May, 1952. The reviewer is also editing a Symposium, entitled *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace* and written by leading Revisionists, which will consider the Roosevelt-Truman foreign policy not only historically, but also in its political and sociological aspects.

Nearly all of these books have been published by two relatively small publishing houses. What might have been the case if Revisionism had not been discouraged and smeared by the blackout contingent, and all publishers had dared to print revisionist volumes, can be left to the reader's imagination. The Langer and Gleason volume (or volumes) cannot very well prevent the publication of revisionist books which have already appeared, and it is doubtful if it will discourage future revisionist publications.

Indeed, there is every probability that the Langer and Gleason effort will greatly stimulate revisionist writing and publication, unless our Ministry of Truth clamps on a rigorous censorship and makes the publication of truth on our foreign policy a crime, which is, of course, a possibility. There are already symptoms of this trend on the horizon. President Truman has, indeed, implied that revisionist historians must be influenced by "Communist Imperialist" attitudes and prejudices. Actually, of course, the "Communist Imperialist" historians of Soviet Russia are passionate supporters of the Roosevelt interventionist policy which led us into the war to assist Russia. Therefore, so far as the revisionist issue is concerned, it is the Interventionists rather than the Revisionists who can most logically be accused of "Communist Imperialist" historical tendencies.

The Langer and Gleason book will produce reviews and articles, and it will whet the appetite of the reading public on the subject. Since those who will read the book will be the more literate element in the population, many are not likely to accept without questioning the suave white-washing performed in the Langer-Gleason volume but will seek to check the statements elsewhere, in such books as those by Beard, Sanborn, and Tansill, which cover the same period. Moreover, some historians may be moved to indignation by the smug, if gracious, finality of tone in the Langer and Gleason book and by its occasional glaring contradictions and inconsistencies, and be incited to revisionist research and writing which they would not otherwise have undertaken. The vast body of facts assembled in the Langer and Gleason book will provide a great armory of ammunition for Revisionists, who can take these facts and give them their logical and realistic historical application.

Indeed, if the second volume of the Langer and Gleason enterprise is generally similar in content to the first, I think it would be no exaggeration to say that I could write a more devastating book than my *Genesis of the World War* on the basis of these volumes simply by giving the facts assembled therein a rational and straight-forward interpretation.

Finally, there are numerous instances in the book where the authors, wittingly or not, tend to give away the whole case for interventionism as a matter of necessity for either American security or world safety. For example, on page 62, they state vigorously that there is no evidence that Hitler had any plans beyond expansion in Eastern Europe or that he entertained any feelings toward Britain and France other than those of peace and friendship. Therefore, in its European aspects, the intervention of Britain, France and the United States against Hitler only resulted in putting Soviet Russia in occupation or control of the areas which Hitler coveted, an outcome which hardly warranted the vast expenditure of blood and money involved and the wanton destruction of property. And Langer and Gleason frequently dispose of the myth that Hitler had even the remotest intention of attacking the United States at any predictable period.

In these ways, the book may greatly encourage and assist Revisionism. Perhaps, Professor Langer remembered how the famous Catholic historian, Cardinal Baronius, published a great body of facts on Church history which were later used against the Catholics by Protestants, or he may have recalled Daniel Defoe's "Shortest Way with the Dissenters," and actually had these in mind when he wrote the book, thus playing a mean trick on his patrons.

If he did not, then the reviewer must close in a note of sadness. It would be highly dolorous to contemplate a scholar of Professor Langer's superb mind, great learning, and indefatigable industry applying all this splendid equipment to the unlovely task of covering up the public malefactions of Churchill and Roosevelt. If this is the fact, then nothing worse has happened to any prominent Russian historian behind the Iron Curtain in the last twenty-five years, even though in the Soviet realm telling the unvarnished truth may be a capital crime. In some ways, the "voluntary servitude" of the American court historians and whitewashers is more deplorable and corroding to the soul than enforced subservience. It is less reprehensible to want to tell the truth and yet be unable to tell it than it is to be free to be truthful and not wish to be.

As I recall the William Leonard Langer of 1923 to 1940, I still would like to believe that, although he has now attained riches and

eminence as a result of his voluntary servitude, nonetheless, he has moments of acute nostalgia for the old Clark days when, even if he earned only \$4,000 a year, he eagerly searched for historical truth, independent and unafraid, and breathed the fresh air of scholarly freedom, as befitted a brilliant and rising young craftsman.

II

THE ROAD TO PEARL HARBOR: *The Coming of the War Between the United States and Japan.* By Herbert Feis. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950. xii, 356 pp. \$5.

In the light of the fact that Professors Langer and Gleason, in their first volume, only bring the story of Rooseveltian diplomacy down to the autumn of 1940, it is fortunate that the other leading court historian who has dealt with the causes of the second World War, Dr. Herbert Feis, carries the narrative through the attack on Pearl Harbor, although he discreetly evades the scandalous details of the days and hours immediately preceding the attack.

Though he disclaims "any kind of official approval, sponsorship or responsibility," Dr. Feis' book may be most fairly regarded and accurately assessed as a sample of the methods and results of the court historian. Such an historian works with the blessing and benediction of the government, has most of the relevant sources of official information placed at his disposal, and is expected to turn in a book which will be satisfactory to the obliging officialdom.

Dr. Feis claims that his book is the product of a "private scholar," but he had access to much information from which "private scholars" are still excluded—the Grew diaries, the Stimson diaries, the Morgenthau diaries and many special government studies to which he makes reference in the course of his treatise.

Having these facilities, it is assumed by the uninitiated that such an historian will make use of all of them with thoroughness and will fearlessly draw all the logical deductions which the documents warrant. Such assumptions are, of course, palpably fallacious. No historian will be permitted full and unrestricted use of recent archival and other official documentary material unless it is reasonably certain in advance that he will render a verdict satisfactory to the government or party in power. He has to present his credentials in advance and have them approved. Dr. Feis was eminently acceptable on these terms, for he had served as an important official in the State and War Departments before and during the second World War. He came to the State Depart-

ment in the Stimson era, when the American policy of vigorous opposition to Japan was first being formulated—the policy that Stimson "sold" to a receptive Roosevelt and the latter followed steadfastly from January, 1933, to the day of his death. It is significant that, out of the long list of prominent persons whom Dr. Feis lists in his Preface as having given him assistance and encouragement, all save for Ambassador Joseph C. Grew and Eugene H. Dooman were supporters of the Roosevelt-Hull policy toward Japan before Pearl Harbor and Grew and Dooman are politely smeared in the course of the book itself.

Few men could have been better prepared than Dr. Feis to write a definitive book on the Japanese-American relations which led to Pearl Harbor. Well educated in history and economics at Harvard, he was economic adviser to the State Department from 1931-1937, and adviser on international affairs to the Department from 1937 to 1943. He played an important personal role in Far Eastern affairs during the Roosevelt administrations and spent some time in the Far East on investigations in the field. He was the author of able books on the economic basis of world relations, an especially important and cogent item in assessing the motives and justification of Japanese policy and actions. He had ample leisure for his project and worked in a lofty intellectual environment, the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, New Jersey. That he failed to turn out the kind of book which he was so admirably prepared to write can only be explained in terms of the motives and operations of court historians.

Another source of disappointment with Dr. Feis' volume is its brevity and its limited time coverage (from the middle of 1937 to Pearl Harbor). Despite the fact that he tells us that it required two years of undivided time to prepare his book, the reviewer finds it difficult to understand just why this could have been the case. As author, editor, and a professor directing the preparation of doctoral dissertations, the reviewer has had much more experience than Dr. Feis in estimating the time required for dependable research and clear writing. Certainly, a year should have been ample time in which to produce so slender a book on so limited a theme. Perhaps, the explanation lies in the fact that it may have taken Dr. Feis as long to consider what should be left out of the book as it did to put in what he has given us to read as "the whole story" of Japanese-American relations from 1937 to 1942. It can hardly be disputed that Dr. Feis left out as much relevant material as he included between the covers of his book. This can easily be demonstrated by reading the books on the same subject by Morgenstern, Beard, Sanborn, and Tansill.

As one searchingly examines in detail the book by Dr. Feis, the author emerges as a polished and sophisticated Orosius rather than an

eager searcher after historical truth in the tradition of Leopold von Ranke, letting the chips fall where they may.

In his *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, written in the early "Dark Ages," Paulus Orosius ignored all the great cultural contribution of pagan antiquity and concentrated on the evils, real and imaginary, which had beset the world before the rise of Christendom. He presented an almost unrelieved picture of "the most signal horrors of war, pestilence and famine, of the fearful devastation of earthquakes and inundations, the destruction wrought by fiery eruptions, by lightning and hail, and the awful misery due to crime."

In similar fashion, Dr. Feis lists and documents elaborately all the Japanese plans for aggressive expansion, real and alleged, and the actions designed to carry out such plans, as well as every important case of Japanese diplomatic double-crossing and deception. But, though he professes to tell "the whole story," he either ignores entirely or minimizes and depreciates the evidence of frequent Japanese attempts to reach a pacific and reasonable understanding with China and the United States. Japanese arrangements with Nazi Germany are fully detailed and roundly condemned. But Dr. Feis fails to mention the fact that Japan had previously sought a pacific *modus vivendi* with the United States in preference to a military alliance with Germany, even going so far in 1939 as to propose a conference of top Japanese and United States officials, an offer which Messrs. Roosevelt and Hull rejected. Especially does Dr. Feis pass over the fact that, by late 1940, the Japanese were prepared to retrace their expansionist steps and retire to Manchuria in behalf of peace with the United States if they could be given a little time and a face-saving formula. This little known but vitally important fact is thoroughly presented by Professor Tansill in his *Back Door to War* (pp. 628-629). The amazing Japanese proposal was set forth to President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull in a long conference on January 23, 1941, but it was brushed off rather contemptuously.

There is virtually nothing in the Feis book which reveals the frequent cases when American acts and statements, wittingly or unwittingly, frustrated the pacific solution of Far Eastern problems and conflicts. Nor are the numerous instances of hypocrisy, double-crossing, and deceit in American diplomatic relations with Japan from 1937 to the end of 1941 brought forth and placed in clear relief. In short, throughout the book, the evidence is consciously selected and marshalled to prove that the Japanese were black-hearted and that war with them was "inevitable," while there is a deliberate reluctance or refusal to examine the bellicose policies that Roosevelt and his entourage were planning and the considerations which motivated them.

An historian friend of mine who has read Dr. Feis' confidential reports to the State Department on Far Eastern conditions during this period tells me that in preparing his book Dr. Feis selected the material from his own reports that was designed to blacken Japan and omitted those items likely to place Japan in a more favorable light. In this technique, Dr. Feis even outdoes Orosius who was never able to select and choose material from previous reports to the papacy on barbarian culture and policies.

Though a professionally-trained economist, Dr. Feis gives little attention to the economic and geopolitical justification for the Japanese drive for expansion. The latter is interpreted primarily as a matter of national arrogance: "Japan, from its seat on the small island of Honshu, wanted to be arbiter of Asia and the Western Pacific. The wish thrived in poverty and pride, finding company in thoughts which made it seem just. The Japanese people came to believe that the extension of their control over this vast region was both natural and destined." There is no hint that the Japanese had more direct interests and rights in expanding in the Far East than the United States had in resisting any such attempts at expansion—a fact recently freely admitted by George F. Kennan.

Nor does Dr. Feis pay attention to the faults and weaknesses of China, far more populous than Japan and much more richly endowed in natural resources, though these Chinese defects and mistakes were the main reason why China was not able easily to repel Japanese intrusion. If we recognize the existence of a whole generation of Chinese venality, corruption, and fratricidal strife, this destroys the moral case for American intervention in the Far East in behalf of China. It was, however, this fictitious moral issue which furnished the main ostensible basis for American foreign policy in the Far East for ten years before Pearl Harbor. There was certainly no sensible economic basis for our supporting China against Japan, inasmuch as, with respect to both trade and investments, our interests in Japan vastly outweighed those in China. Economic considerations did play a dominant role in Mr. Roosevelt's attitude toward Far Eastern problems, but they were of a personal, quaint, and archaic sort—the fact that his Delano ancestors had made large profits out of trade with China. He was unmoved by the changes in economic interests after Commodore Perry had opened Japan to western trade and the fact that, by 1933, the United States was making far larger profits out of trade and investments in Japan than in China.

Dr. Feis thus follows faithfully, if loftily, in the methodological footsteps of Orosius. His politeness consists in the fact that he does not extensively resort to the smearing methods of Basil Rauch, Schlesinger

Jr., and most of the "blackout boys." But he does occasionally lapse into this procedure. For example, he describes Charles A. Beard's article on "Giddy Minds and Foreign Quarrels," in *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1939, as "virulent." As a matter of fact, this article, expanded in a little book of the same title, was probably the most cogent and penetrating explanation of the revolution in our foreign policy, and the motives lying behind it, which has ever been set down. On the whole, however, Dr. Feis' highly selective and one-sided exercise in the interpretation of Japanese-American relations is conducted with dignity and ostensible urbanity.

One of the main weaknesses of the book, aside from its lack of fairness to the Japanese position, lies in the absence of any adequate treatment of the historical background of our conflict with Japan from 1937 to 1941. The account begins with 1937, and the United States is represented as having maintained an attitude of relative isolation towards Japan until 1940. Nobody who actually believes this could possibly understand "the road to Pearl Harbor." Even Secretary Hull once stated that our war with Japan began in 1931, with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Secretary of State Stimson surely wanted a hot war with Japan to begin then. At Roosevelt's invitation, he later transmitted his bellicose views to the President-elect at Hyde Park on January 9, 1933. President Roosevelt discussed, if he did actually not propose, war with Japan in his very first Cabinet meetings in March, 1933. Although the Cabinet discouraged his war talk, Roosevelt was able to secure greatly increased naval appropriations, and the ever-expanding navy was pointed directly at Japan.

Indeed, so far as President Roosevelt's personal attitude toward the Far East is concerned, it is evident that his mind was made up some 35 years or more before 1937 and at least 30 years before Mr. Stimson visited him at Hyde Park. On January 18, 1933, Raymond Moley and Rexford G. Tugwell argued at length with Mr. Roosevelt, seeking to prevent him from accepting the bellicose Stimson doctrine on the Far East. Roosevelt rebuffed them by reminding them that his Delano ancestors had been deeply involved in a lucrative trade with China. As a result of this, he said: "I have always had the deepest respect for the Chinese. How could you expect me not to go along with Stimson on Japan?" If Roosevelt's affection for China was based on the trade of his ancestors, his hostility to Japan was founded on even more nebulous, personal, and fantastic considerations, chiefly the tales of a "Japanese schoolboy" who was a fellow-student with Roosevelt at Harvard in 1902. Mr. Stimson tells us in his *Diary* of a long and intimate conversation with Roosevelt during his first term in the course of which Roosevelt regaled Stimson with "an extraordinary but impressive tale

of the long-term ambitions of the Japanese as they had been explained to young Franklin Roosevelt by a Japanese friend at Harvard in 1902." This irresponsible gossip of a Japanese student nearly forty years earlier appeared to weigh more heavily with Roosevelt than the pacific proposals of responsible Japanese statesmen and diplomats in the years immediately before Pearl Harbor.

Secretary Hull's attitude toward Japan was also born of sentiments and attitudes which long predated 1933, to say nothing of 1937, and were just as far removed from reality as the biases of President Roosevelt. Hull's orientation was a compound of Pharisaism and apparent ignorance of diplomatic history, especially that of the United States. Operating as though he had never heard of such things as the speeches of the "Warhawks" preceding the War of 1812, the slogan of "Fifty-four Forty or Fight," the manner in which we acquired Texas and California, the seizure of Mason and Slidell, Cleveland's virtual ultimatum to Britain over the Venezuela boundary dispute, McKinley's urging a war with Spain when he had in his pocket the Spanish concessions to our demands, and the manner in which Theodore Roosevelt acquired the Panama Canal strip, Hull proceeded to formulate ideals and beatitudes for other nations to follow which few or no countries have ever lived up to in modern times. He then judged the Japanese, but not the Chinese or Russian, actions and policies by these unreal and hypocritical standards. Naturally, the Japanese no more met such requirements than did the United States. But Hull took cognizance only of Japanese transgressions and proceeded to feud with the Japanese and to reject their every serious effort to secure a peaceful adjustment with the United States.

Starting off with the resumption of the Japanese-Chinese War at the Marco Polo Bridge on July 7, 1937, Dr. Feis presents this as an act of unprovoked aggression on the part of Japan. He does not mention the fact that it was our various forms of aid to China and our diplomatic pressure which enabled Chiang Kai-shek to build up a large army and encouraged him to take up the gage of battle. Nor does Dr. Feis reveal the fact that, by 1937, the more reasonable elements in both Japan and China were in favor of patching up the differences between the two countries and that war was resumed as much because of our aid and encouragement to Chiang as because of Japanese aggression. All this is presented in some detail in Chapters XX and XXVI of Professor Tansill's *Back Door to War*. State Department documents reveal the fact that, by 1937, Chiang had become convinced that the Communists were the chief enemy of China and sought peace with Japan. But our representatives in China bitterly opposed any such policy and induced Chiang to proceed with war with Japan.

Throughout the book, pacific gestures and overtures by Japan are ignored, played down, or depreciated. This is notably true of the Japanese conferences with Ambassador Grew and Counselor Dooman of the American Embassy in Tokyo in 1939, 1940 and 1941, in the course of which the Japanese attempted to reach some reasonable *modus vivendi* with the United States.

In Dr. Feis' pages, Grew appears almost invariably as a weak, wishful-thinker, "moved by portents not by evidence." Grew's repeated assertions that the United States might reach a working accord with Japan without sacrificing vital American interests in the Far East are rejected as lacking in discernment of the realities in the situation. Dr. Feis would have us believe that men sitting at their desks in Washington, many of them with little or no personal knowledge of Japan, were more capable of judging Japanese attitudes than Grew and Dooman, who knew Japan and its people intimately and were in daily contact with Japanese leaders. While the anti-Americanism of certain Japanese officials is repeatedly emphasized, the vigorous anti-Japanese sentiments of Stanley K. Hornbeck, and Secretaries Hull, Stimson, Ickes, and Morgenthau, are rarely or never condemned but are usually presented as embodying the highest conceptions of diplomatic urbanity and sound statecraft.

One of the dominant themes of Dr. Feis' book is his stress on the inconsistency and hypocrisy of Japanese diplomacy throughout the period under discussion. On the one hand, Japan is portrayed as actually bent on a grandiose scheme of expansion in Asia and the East Indies designed to create a "New Order in Asia." At the same time, according to Dr. Feis, Japan hypocritically pretended pacific objectives and a sincere effort to maintain peace with the United States.

Even though this were completely true, such criticism would come with bad grace from an upholder of American policy from 1937 to Pearl Harbor. Certainly, there was no greater contrast between "appearances and realities" in Japanese diplomacy than there was between the official pledges of peace which the Administration made to the American people in 1937-1941 and the secret plans for war which were being laid and executed at the same time. Any actual Japanese hypocrisy and double-crossing, in talking peace and planning for war, can be easily matched by our own combination of diplomatic shadow-boxing and war planning with respect to Japan during the four years preceding Pearl Harbor.

There is much more to be said in behalf of the merits of a Japanese "New Order" in the Far East than for the American program of maintaining the *status quo* intact. The Japanese interests and needs were certainly more immediate and vital. The Japanese requirements in

the way of living space, raw materials, and markets were surely of greater moment than the fact that President Roosevelt's ancestors had traded with the Chinese—the main reason given by Roosevelt for supporting China against Japan. Even George F. Kennan, not an avowed revisionist historian, concedes the truth and logic of this consideration in his *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950*.

Though Dr. Feis roundly denounces the Japanese leaders, and especially Matsuoka, for conniving and signing up with the Nazis, he fails to tell us that a Nazi military mission trained Chiang Kai-shek's forces and directed their strategy until 1938, all with warm approval by the United States. There is not even a hint that the first important attacks on Hitler's European moves by Roosevelt came after the Nazi military mission was withdrawn from China. We have already called attention to the fact that Dr. Feis neglects to mention that the Japanese sought to arrange a pacific settlement with the United States as an alternative to a military alliance with Germany, even proposing a top level conference to bring this about in 1939.

Dr. Feis admits that the economic and financial embargo placed on Japan by the United States in July, 1941, meant inevitable and eventual war, but he contends that Roosevelt did not expect the war to come until Britain had been beaten. Yet the embargo was imposed weeks after Germany had invaded Russia, which indefinitely postponed any possible conquest of Britain by Hitler—surely postponed it far beyond any period during which Japan could wait for oil and other vital raw materials. In Dr. Feis' discussion of the meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill off Newfoundland in August, 1941, there is no hint that this meeting was chiefly devoted to finding a way to enter the war through the Japanese back door and to charting the methods to be followed—a fact perhaps inadvertently blurted out by Forrest Davis and Ernest K. Lindley in their quasi-official account of the background of Pearl Harbor.¹

The vital Konoye gestures to the United States in the autumn of 1941 are waved aside as no more than a hypocritical and underhanded effort to gain time. Prince Konoye is portrayed as a shady and unreliable character who had long been involved in laying plots for Japanese aggression and was unlikely to be capable of sincere support of peace and justice in the Far East: "Konoye's record was bad; he had too often been either the author or tool of deception. The Japanese promises seemed born of design, not of desire. They had something of the same hand-to-heart touch that Hitler had used on Chamberlain at Munich. In short, there was no faith—and, as has been said, without

¹ *How War Came*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1942, pp. 9-13.

faith there can be no works." Taking the dimmest possible view of the diplomacy of Konoye and other Japanese leaders, it could not well have been more lacking in good faith, candor, and integrity than the diplomacy of Roosevelt and Hull on Far Eastern questions from 1933 to Pearl Harbor.

At sharp variance with the opinions of Messrs. Grew and Dooman, Dr. Feis contends that the rejection of the Konoye overtures for a meeting with President Roosevelt was sound statesmanship and did little or nothing to make war with Japan more certain. But even Dr. Feis is forced to admit that Konoye could have made great concessions if he had been given the opportunity: "Konoye could have honestly agreed that Japan would stop its southern advance and reduce its forces in China to the minimum needed to assure compliance with its wishes." Proposal B, placed before Hull by the Japanese on November 20, 1941, actually embraced such terms, and many will hold that Japan went as far as any country not bent upon war could have demanded of it at the moment. Certainly, the proposal represented a great, if not humiliating, retreat from the grandiose program of Japanese expansion which Dr. Feis describes at the outset of his book. It constituted far more extensive concessions to the United States than the latter would have made to any country at the time, Japan or other.

The historic document which Hull delivered to the Japanese on November 26, 1941, is interpreted as in no sense an ultimatum: "There seems to me no warrant for making it an ultimatum—either in the military or political sense." This Dr. Feis maintains, although Hull admits that the document took Japanese-American relations out of the realm of diplomacy and handed them over to the military. Indeed some pages earlier (p. 276) Dr. Feis himself admits, if the word means anything, that the demands embodied in American policy throughout 1941 constituted an ultimatum to Japan: "The error, the fault, in American policy—if there was one—was not in the refusal to trust what Konoye could honestly offer. It was in insisting that Japan entirely clear out of Indo-China and China (and perhaps out of Manchukuo) and give up all exclusive privileges in these countries." Hull's demands included just this. In fact, Secretary Stimson and high Army and Navy officials regarded Roosevelt's warning to Ambassador Nomura after the Newfoundland Conference of August, 1941, as virtually an ultimatum.

Dr. Feis even tries to wave aside as irrelevant Secretary Stimson's observation on the day prior to Hull's November 26 ultimatum that "the question was how we should maneuver them [the Japanese] into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves." Stimson, Dr. Feis contends, did not really mean what he said: "His language was, I think, hurried and elliptic."

In the concluding portions of his book, Dr. Feis reveals at length that we knew in detail of the Japanese plans for war, in case diplomacy failed, and that our authorities in Washington were certain that it would fail. Yet, there is no serious consideration of why we were not prepared to meet the attack that we knew was on the way. Dr. Feis surely knows that, nearly a year prior to Pearl Harbor, Mr. Grew had warned the Washington authorities that any future surprise Japanese attack on the United States would probably be directed on Pearl Harbor and that the Washington authorities then agreed that he was correct in this prophecy.

Dr. Feis does not explain why Kimmel and Short were not properly and promptly warned of the impending Japanese attack. They could and should have been so warned three days before the attack. The "East Wind Rain" message, intercepted by American intelligence officers on December 4th, revealed that the Japanese had decided to make war on the United States. That war was actually upon us was known over fifteen hours before the Japanese planes struck at our ships. All we are told by Dr. Feis is that at noon on December 7th General Marshall was fumbling "with and over a last minute alert" to General Short. No explanation is given as to why the alert was allowed to be a last minute affair or why Marshall sent it by ordinary commercial radio, not even marked "urgent," instead of sending it instantly by quick scrambler telephone or by the fast Navy and FBI radio service. Perhaps if he had, Japan would not have fired the first shot.

In fact, Dr. Feis' treatment of the immediate circumstances preceding and surrounding the Pearl Harbor attack is almost incredibly brief, sketchy and inadequate, especially for a book devoted wholly to the events leading up to the Pearl Harbor attack. It may be fairly assumed that he found the facts too hot to handle and that to ignore the essential material was easier than to explain or defend it. This probably explains Dr. Feis' very slight reference to the devastating information turned in by the several official and the congressional investigations of the background of Pearl Harbor.

A good example of Dr. Feis' selection and suppression of material comes to mind at this point. This is the complete failure to mention the message sent by Captain John M. Creighton, American naval observer at Singapore, to Admiral Thomas C. Hart, containing the statement of British Air Marshal Brooke-Popham to the effect that the British had received advance assurance from Washington that the United States would back them up in war, even if the fighting started without any Japanese attack on American forces or territory. The authenticity of this assurance has been thoroughly established by Charles Austin

Beard in his *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941* (pp. 537ff), and by the official Army publication, *Chief of Staff: Pre-war Plans and Preparations*. Indeed, Dr. Feis, himself, admits that this would probably have been the American procedure (pp. 320-324): "The Asiatic fleet would almost certainly have become engaged at once in the defense of the Malay Barrier."

This item concerning our agreement in the Singapore arrangement of April, 1941, to go to war with Japan, even though the latter did not attack American forces or possessions, is very important in connection with the international situation just before Pearl Harbor. The documents show Roosevelt and his entourage greatly concerned lest the Japanese should strike at Thailand or some other point not directly involving the United States. Basil Rauch and some others have used this fact to shield Roosevelt from guilt concerning Pearl Harbor, alleging that he only expected an attack on Thailand or adjacent non-American territory. That Roosevelt and his associates were greatly agitated during the day or so preceding Pearl Harbor relative to this possible Japanese move is certain. But their agitation was primarily political and a matter of propaganda strategy.

Roosevelt had repeatedly promised the American public that we would not go to war unless the United States, its forces or territory, was attacked. But he had promised the British, the Commonwealth Nations, and the Dutch that he would go to war if the Japanese passed a certain line in the Pacific. If the Japanese had done this they would have placed Mr. Roosevelt in a very bad and embarrassing spot. He would have had to repudiate his promises to the American people or to the British and Dutch. Hence, the great relief of Roosevelt and his advisers when the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor. Probably the best manner of crisply summarizing the situation is to say that Roosevelt and his top-level associates expected and desired an attack on Pearl Harbor, but they greatly feared a Japanese attack on non-American territory which would have brought with it great political embarrassment for the President.

Naturally, Dr. Feis avoids all discussion of this important matter, as well as of Secretary's Stimson's personal plan to pull a Pearl Harbor on the Japanese by a surprise air attack on their forces from the Philippines.

Aside from the highly selective and jaundiced treatment of Japanese policy, a serious error in the Feis book lies in attributing too much power and responsibility to Secretary Hull in handling our relations with Japan. Hull may not have been the complete figurehead as Secretary of State that many picture him to have been. But neither did he

exert the authority and independence attributed to him by Feis. Stanley Hornbeck, the State Department specialist on the Far East, exerted a strong influence in maintaining our adamant opposition to pacific Japanese policies, in which he was powerfully supported by Secretaries Stimson, Ickes, and Morgenthau. In the last critical months, Roosevelt dominated our basic policy with Japan. And, in certain crises of great importance, lesser personalities played a crucial role, a case in point being the vital effect of the pressure brought to bear by Owen Lattimore and Lauchlin Currie, under Chinese and possibly Russian influence, to induce Roosevelt to release the ultimatum of November 26, 1941, a matter only vaguely alluded to by Dr. Feis (p. 316).

As a concluding appraisal of the Feis volume, one may say that it is an effort to substitute dignity and loftiness of tone for honesty and integrity of purpose. While there is little of Basil Rauch's feverish excitement and ecstatic adulation, it is doubtful if Dr. Feis's interpretation of the Roosevelt foreign policy is much closer to the truth than that offered by Rauch in his *Roosevelt from Munich to Pearl Harbor*. Perhaps Rauch's reckless earnestness is preferable to the simulated objectivity of Feis. Surely, Dr. Feis' volume is more dangerous to the cause of truth than the Rauch book. The rash enthusiasm of the latter will put even the discerning lay reader on his guard. But the lofty tone of the Feis treatise is likely to deceive almost anybody not well informed on the details of Far Eastern history and Japanese-American diplomacy. If Dr. Feis' book is to be regarded as a representative product of its department of history and international relations, then the Princeton institution might appropriately be rechristened "The Institute for Retarded Study."

The most adequate manner in which to pass judgment on American policy towards Japan, and on Dr. Feis' effort to defend it almost *in toto*, is to contrast probable conditions in the Far East, if we had accepted the Japanese offer of January 23, 1941, or the Japanese Proposals A or B of November, 1941, as the basis for further negotiations and final settlement, with what exists in Asia and the East Indies today. Even the worst Japan-baiter would hardly allege that the situation could have been as precarious for us as it stands at the mid-century. We are now left to deal with enemies far more numerous, powerful, hostile, and intransigent than Japan was ever likely to become, even had she set up her New Order in Asia.

Just how much reliance can be placed upon reviews by upholders of the official mythology, even when appearing in publications sponsored by the highest historical and journalistic circles, can be illustrated by the opinions rendered in the review of Dr. Feis' book in the *American Historical Review*, the *New York Times Book Review*,

the *New York Herald-Tribune* Book Review, and the *Political Science Quarterly*.

In the first of these, April, 1951, p. 617, Professor Edwin O. Reischauer of Harvard University wrote: "Herbert Feis has done a remarkably clear and complete job of mapping for us every twist and turn of the road to Pearl Harbor. . . . In time new materials may come to light, but there is little probability that they will alter the story perceptibly."

Whatever one may think of Dr. Feis' attitude and interpretations, nothing could well be more preposterous than to claim that the book is a *complete* coverage of the road to Pearl Harbor, or that it "maps for us *every* twist and turn of the road." Few books of the size on the subject could well have been more highly selective in the material set forth. Further, no new materials are needed to "alter the story perceptibly." What is already well known to experts completely upsets Dr. Feis' "story." This fact is an adequate comment upon the opinion of Otto D. Tolischus, writing in the *New York Times* Book Review, September 17, 1950, to the effect that Feis's book is "such a complete, scholarly, and balanced account of the events that led up to the tragedy that it may be regarded as the final word."

Walter Millis, in the *New York Herald-Tribune* Book Review October 29, 1950, wrote of the Feis volume: ". the first reasonably complete diplomatic history of the origins of our war with Japan. . ."—this about a book which begins the history of the origins of the war with events of 1937, and even treats these on a false note. Equally illuminating is the estimate offered by R. A. Winnacker in the *Political Science Quarterly*, September, 1951: "The primary task of the historian is 'to establish the facts,' and Herbert Feis has admirably performed this task for the complicated and wearisome story of Japanese-American relations, 1939-1941. It is most doubtful that any significant information will be added to the record in the future. The evidence is in, and fortunately Mr. Feis lets the facts speak for themselves, indicating carefully whenever he mentions an opinion of his own. This is a most refreshing change."

The extent to which Dr. Feis' interpretations of Far Eastern relations with the United States within the framework of the methodology of Orosius have been supplanted by sober fact and realism can best be appreciated by examining the chapters on Japanese-American negotiations in Professor Tansill's *Back Door to War*.